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July 10, 2017

The Honorable Rick Nolan
U.S. House of Representatives
2366 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Nolan:

The Duluth Seaway Port Authority supports your leadership with the introduction of H.R. 3115, the Superior National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2017. This action is crucial as it requires the U.S. Forest Service to move forward with the PolyMet's NorthMet Land Exchange in an efficient manner.

In February 2014, the Duluth Seaway Port Authority Board of Commissioners passed a resolution (Resolution No. 7-14) to support the PolyMet Mining Corporation's (PolyMet) project planned for Hoyt Lakes, MN.

A thorough and comprehensive environmental review of the NorthMet Mining Project and Land Exchange has been completed under the National Environmental Policy Act and the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act. The Final Environmental Impact Statement was determined to be adequate by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources back in early 2016 and by the U.S. Forest Service's Final Record of Decision, which was completed in January 2017. However, the land exchange still has not been finalized. We have confidence that the Forest Services' decision to support this land exchange is in the best interests of the public.

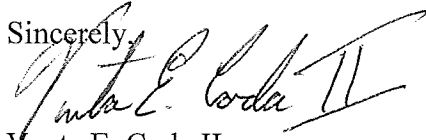
Enactment of the bill will not authorize any mining to occur, but passage and a timely resolution of the land exchange opens a much-needed door for the prospect of a new generation of good-paying mining jobs in Northeast Minnesota. Direct and indirect jobs associated with the PolyMet project are critical for our regional economy in the near term. The long term opportunity that the project presents for value added processes will be key to balancing and diversifying our regional and local (Duluth) economic base. Furthermore, Duluth is a transportation and logistics nexus; any project of this nature that generates freight through primary and secondary markets helps drive our local economy.

When the Minnesota State Legislature established the Duluth Seaway Port Authority, the organization was charged with the responsibility of fostering regional maritime commerce, promoting trade development, advocating for maritime and transportation interests, and facilitating industrial development in the region. For nearly 60 years, we have worked with state and federal agencies to protect air, land and water resources through regulatory oversight and permitting processes in our own projects. We are familiar with the thoroughness and stringency of the environmental review processes, and as a result, we are confident in the level of environmental protection afforded by those processes. We encourage passage of H.R. 3115 so that the proposed PolyMet project can move forward through the remainder of that permitting process.

Thank you and your colleagues for the leadership in putting this bill forward. Bringing closure and certainty to this process through Congressional action and rapid passage of the enabling legislation through the U.S. Congress would allow PolyMet to continue through the necessary permitting phases.

Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance in moving this matter forward. I can be reached at 218-727-8525.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vanta E. Coda II". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vanta" being the most prominent.

Vanta E. Coda II
Executive Director

CC: Senator Amy Klobuchar
Senator Al Franken
Congressman Peterson
Congressman Emmer
Congressman Lewis
Will.Mitchell@mail.house.gov